good English speakers. It is amazing to realize that they all grew up in the cruel, hateful and impoverished world Slobodan Milosevic had created for them in the 1990s. In the meeting, they provided one piece of very good news. One Otpor activist, Boris Karajcic, had testified in 1998 before the Helsinki Commission which I co-chair and was beaten up on the streets of Belgrade a few weeks later. Today, Boris is a member of the Serbian parliament. He is an active part of Serbia's future.

Otpor itself will also be part of Serbia's future. While Milosevic is out of power, there is much to be done to recover from the nightmare he created. First, they are investigating and compiling complaints about the police officers who brutalized them and other citizens of Serbia who opposed the regime, and they will seek to ensure that officers who seemed to take a particular delight in beating people for exercising their rights are held accountable. They want to see Milosevic himself arrested, both for his crimes in Serbia and the war crimes for which he faces an international indictment. The Otpor group also advocates the founding of a school of public administration, which does not exist in Serbia and is desperately needed as the government bureaucracies are swollen with Milosevic cronies who have no idea how to implement public policy. Along similar lines, they hope to begin an anti-corruption campaign. Finally, they pointed out that, with the fall of Milosevic, the united opposition now in power has no credible, democratic political opposition to it. Until Serbian politics develop further, they intend to serve some of that role, being a watchdog of the new leaders.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the Otpor group with which I met has a track record of accomplishment, ideas for the future, and a good sense of how to bring those ideas into reality. While they have had the heart and the courage, they also have had the assistance of the United States through the National Endowment of Democracy and other organizations which promote democratic development abroad. I hope my colleagues will continue to support this kind of assistance, for Serbia and other countries where it is needed, which serves not only the interests of the United States but the cause of humanity.

COLEMAN INDUSTRIAL CONSTRUCTION OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2001

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the owners, Don and Diane Coleman, and the employees of Coleman Industrial Construction of Kansas City, Missouri, for their recognition by the National Railroad Construction Maintenance Association (NRC). Coleman Industrial Construction has been presented with the NRC's Contractor Safety Award. The NRC annually recognizes one firm with less than 25 employees from among more than 200 firms nationwide for their outstanding, accident-free record among small railroad contractors.

This distinction does not come about easily. It is the result of many hours of work, seminars, and training provided by Coleman Industrial Construction coupled with the tireless efforts of all its employees to focus on reducing the risks of accidents and injury. Due to the work of the experienced and professional employees and their "safety-first" attitude, Coleman Industrial Construction has been able to go 14 years without a "lost time" accident.

While Coleman Industrial Construction is being recognized among other small railroad contractors, their performance is a standard for all industries. Their continued emphasis on job safety serves as a worthy model nationwide.

Again, I congratulate and commend the owners and employees of Coleman Industrial Construction on their outstanding performance in reducing injuries at the workplace.

A BILL TO AMEND THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986 TO REPEAL THE REQUIRED USE OF CERTAIN PRINCIPAL REPAYMENTS ON MORTGAGE SUBSIDY BOND FINANCINGS TO REDEEM BONDS, TO MODIFY THE PURCHASE PRICE LIMITATION UNDER MORTGAGE SUBSIDY BOND RULES BASED ON MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

HON. AMO HOUGHTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 8, 2001

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleague from Massachusetts, Mr. NEAL, in introducing our bill, "The Housing Bond and Credit Modernization and Fairness Act." Our joining together in introducing this bill today is indicative of the broad bipartisan support Housing Bonds and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (Housing Credit) programs enjoy.

The Congress has an unusual opportunity, without creating any new program, to create new housing opportunity for tens of thousands of low- and moderate-income families every year. All it will take is enactment of minor legislative changes to eliminate obsolete provisions in the two principal Federal programs that finance the production of affordable housing: Housing Bonds, or single family Mortgage Revenue Bonds (MRBs), as they are commonly known, and the Housing Credit.

This bill builds on important legislation Representative NEAL and I introduced and supported in the last two Congresses to increase the Housing Bond authority by nearly 50 percent to make up for the effects of inflation. In the 106th Congress this piece of legislation, as well as the Housing Credit legislation, had the phenomenal support of 375-plus House cosponsors from both parties, from all regions of the country, and from rural and urban districts. Finally, in late 2000, legislation applicable to both the Housing Bonds and Housing Credit was enacted into law.

The Housing Bond and Credit Modernization and Fairness Act does three things. First, the bill would repeal the Ten-Year Rule, a provision added to the MRB program in 1988 that prevents States from using homeowner payments on such mortgages to make new mortgages to additional qualified purchasers. States estimate that, between 1998 and 2002, the Rule will mean the loss of over $8.5 billion in mortgage authority, denying tens of thousands of qualified lower income homebuyers each year the ability to obtain affordable MRB-financed mortgages. Second, the bill would replace the present unworkable limit on the price of the homes these mortgages can finance with a simple limit that works. No reliable comprehensive data exists in all areas of the country to determine average area home prices. The current price limits were issued in 1994 based on 1993 data. They are obsolete and well below current home price levels in most parts of the country. Many qualified buyers simply cannot find homes that are priced below the outdated limits.

The answer is to modify the present limit, set in Washington, with a simple formula limiting the purchase price to three and a half times the qualifying income under the program.

We would like to acknowledge the leadership and support of our colleague Representative BEREUTER, who introduced last year and reintroduced in this Congress this element of our legislation as a freestanding bill.

Finally, the bill makes Housing Credit apartment production viable in rural areas by allowing statewide median incomes as the basis for the income limits in that program. This change would apply the same methodology in determining qualifying income levels that is used in the MRB Program. HUD data shows that current income limits inhibit Housing Credit development in at least 1,700 of the 2,364 non-metropolitan counties across the country.

It is noteworthy that the changes proposed by The Housing Bond and Credit Modernization and Fairness Act were endorsed by the bipartisan National Governors Association at its recently concluded meeting. The governors know how important the Housing Bond and Housing Credit programs are in giving states the ability to meet the housing needs of low- and moderate-income families. The governors know that we need to do more to ensure that the important increase in authority that over 375 House Members cosponsored last year really can reach as many qualified people as possible.

Even after the passage of last year's legislation, over 100,000 qualified lower income homebuyers are not able to get an affordable MRB funded mortgage and over 70 percent of non-metropolitan counties across the country will be inhibited in full use of the Housing Credit program.

For those of you that cosponsored those bills last year, and those of my colleagues who are new to the Congress, we hope you will join our bipartisan effort to see that these important provisions are enacted as part of tax legislation this year.